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STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & ECONOMIC GROWTH
LANSING

STANLEY PRUSS
DIRECTOR

**Michigan Commission on Spanish Speaking Affairs
Cristo Rey Community Center, 1717 N. High Street
Lansing, Michigan 48906
January 29, 2010
Meeting Minutes No. 271**

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairperson García called the meeting to order at 10:10a.m.

Commissioners Present: Lawrence García, Olga Hernández-Patino, Rick García, Maria Elena Rodriguez, Michael Espinoza, Art Luna, Arminda García, Alicia Villarreal, Gil Guzman, Art Reyes

Absent: Fred Feliciano, Mike Ramírez, Leonard Savala, Debra Ehrmann, Benjamin Inquilla,

Staff Present: Marylou Mason, Victoria García

II. Introduction of Commissioners

Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.

III. Welcoming Remarks

Mr. John Roy Castillo, Executive Director, Cristo Rey Community Center, welcomed the Commission.

IV. Approval of Absences:

MOTION: Commissioner Villarreal motioned to approve the absences of Commissioners Danny Inquilla, Debra Ehrmann, Mike Ramirez, Fred Feliciano, and Leonard Savala. All absences were due to work commitments with the exception of Commissioner Feliciano who had a sick child. Commissioner Luna supported the motion. Motion carried.

Chairman García stated

V. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Commissioner Rodriguez motioned to approve the agenda of January 29, 2010. Commissioner Garcia supported the motion. Motion carried.

VI. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Commissioner Espinoza motioned to approve the November 5, 2009 meeting minutes. No discussion. Commissioner Luna moved to support the motion. Motion carried.

VII. Election of Officers:

The Nomination and Election process was conducted by Commissioner Mike Espinoza and Mike Ramirez (absent). The ballot included the following slate: Chairperson – Lawrence Garcia, Vice-Chairperson – Fred Feliciano, Secretary – Olga Hernandez-Patino, and Trustee – Rick Garcia. Commissioner Espinoza suggested that since there is no contention for each position, that the slate be accepted as is with no secret ballot voting.

MOTION: Commissioner Villarreal moved to accept the slate of nominated officers. Commissioner Rodriguez supported the motion. Motion carried.

Chairman García congratulated all of the elected officers.

VIII. Public Forum

Guillermo Lopez, City of Lansing and Lansing School Board Member: Mr. Lopez stated that he was on the complete count committee with the 2010 Census. He encouraged the Commission to take a stand and support the Census as it so important to be counted. Mr. Lopez also commented on the importance of education in our community. There are many cuts to education statewide, as well as to the Lansing School District. He stated it is important to encourage more Latino school board members to ensure inclusion and for our people to have a voice.

Rafael Coronado, Nutrition Program at Cristo Rey Community Center: Mr. Coronado briefly stated he runs the nutrition program and stressed the importance of eating healthy foods from the five food groups.

IX. Executive Reports

Chairperson's Report: Chairman García stated that he has reviewed the 2009 Commissioner Attendance Report and the results were not satisfactory. The By-Laws require participation and absences should not exceed more two consecutive meetings. There are four Commissioners that were absent four meetings last year and this cannot continue to occur. In order for the Commission to be engaged in our work together, attendance at Commission Meeting must be a priority. For this year, if Commissioners miss more than two consecutive meetings, they will be asked to step down.

At the last Retreat in November, the future of funding for COSSA was discussed. COSSA's future is uncertain and we are working on ways to prevent its demise. One of the sources of concern is the Asian Pacific Islander Commission has been created by legislation but was not provided any state funding. This creates a civil rights issue where there is one Commission that is fully funded and another Commission with no funding. The Asian Pacific Islander Commission, as well as COSSA, has the provision to seek outside grants and funding. There is much discussion of the Asian Commission funding their own existence. Chairman García stated that if they can, so can COSSA. Ms. Mason set up a meeting for the Chair and Vice-Chair to meet with the Hispanic Caucus, Reps. Gonzales and Espinoza and Sen. Garcia, to discuss COSSA's future. Discussion included Advocacy Day

that we are planning to show COSSA's relevance and importance. Chairman García felt they received mixed reviews from the legislators on COSSA's funding being continued.

Commissioner Espinoza inquired what the responses were from the legislators. Chairman García stated that from Rep. Espinoza who discussed the amount of money at stake and the Commission's funding being less than the margin of error on Michigan's budget annually. He didn't feel this would be difficult to protect. Rep. Gonzales discussed the difficulties of the budget and the amounts available to state are changing rapidly. He stated he was hopeful that the funding wouldn't be cut all at once but perhaps a gradual reduction over time or perhaps things will balance out and survive. Sen. Garcia stated he thought it would be difficult for the senate to approve this kind of expenditure and COSSA would likely get lost in the budget. He is certainly in favor of COSSA and willing to help us where he can.

Commissioner Guzman inquired what COSSA's budget was. He stated he was the president of New Latino Vision in the Kalamazoo area and they used to tap one of the top three gentlemen in the world that gives money to organizations – Mr. Johnny Striker. Mr. Striker gives away a billion dollars a year to different organizations. The Johnny Striker Foundation is going through their funding right now for 2011. Commissioner Guzman stated if COSSA could write a grant they may be able to provide funding.

Chairman García stated that he and Ms. Mason recently met with Mr. Ramon Murguia from the Kellogg Foundation. He provided information about the Mott Foundation and other big foundations we may approach for funding. Chairman García stated he feels now is the time that any Commissioner whom has experience writing grants to assist in this area.

Commissioner Rick Garcia stated that grants are wonderful but you have to look at sustainability as well. He inquired to Commissioner Guzman if the Striker Foundation was for only Kalamazoo. Commissioner Guzman said no it was all over the U.S.

Chairman García state that in regard to MI Hispanic Advocacy Day, contacts letters have gone out to 35 collaborating organizations/agencies to garner support, corporate letters have been sent out, Save the Date postcards have been printed and are in the process of being mailed out and we have gained the support of the Hispanic Caucus.

B. Executive Director's Report:

Ms. Mason stated she provided a written report within the meeting packet and entertained any questions. Ms. Mason also reported on the following:

- 1) Ms. Mason announced that two DELEG staffer, Lori Donlan and Pauline Bateman from the Communications Office, will be coming to address the Commission on what marketing services they could provide for MI Hispanic Advocacy Day.

Ms. Donlan and Ms. Bateman addressed the Commission and provided a handout on what marketing assistance they could provide for Advocacy Day. They requested direction from the Commission on what our goals are for MHAD.

Chairman García thanked Ms. Donlan and Ms. Bateman for their information and advised them that Advocacy Day will be an opportunity to show organized participation in government by the Hispanic community.

- 2) Ms. Mason provided a proposed meeting dates and schedule for 2010. After discussion, the following changes were made to the schedule: 2) the August 6 meeting in Lawrence hosted by Commissioner Guzman was moved to July 30 – no meeting will then be held in August, the Sept. 10 meeting will be held in Flint and co-hosted by Commissioners Arminda Garcia and Art Reyes.

MOTION: Commissioner Art Luna moved to accept the proposed meeting schedule with the two schedule adjustments. Supported by Commissioner Guzman. Motion carried.

- 3) Ms. Mason stated she will be sending information to Commissioners on the 2010 National Council of La Raza's Annual Conference, San Antonio, Texas in July. As COSSA is still an affiliate, Ms. Mason encouraged Commissioners to attend and stated that she will be attending and paying her own way. Ms. Mason also stated the U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute Annual Meeting is February 17, 2010 and will be attending. Commissioner Espinoza indicated he will also be attending this conference.

IV. Committee Reports:

Economic Development: Executive Director Mason stated that she is working with Commissioner Feliciano and Lansing Community College on planning a business forum in Lansing sometime after April.

Education: Commissioner Arminda Garcia stated this committee has not met in some time. This committee needs to regroup and decide what direction they will take for 2010. She reported that in early December 2009, she had a conversation with Dr. Martinez, JSRI, discussing the education crisis that the entire state is experiencing. During this conversation, Dr. Martinez indicated that during the Latino Summit that his office held last year, education was one of the priority issues. Dr. Martinez is interested in bringing together educators from different sectors of the state to build foundations and tackle the education problems our children are experiencing.

Chairman García requested that the Education Committee come up with an initiative with deliverables.

Legislative & Civic Engagement: Commissioner Inquilla was absent – no report.

Old Business:

- 1) Request by Robert Gardner & Migrant Rest Stop for Commission Endorsement: Ms. Mason handed out a copy of a support letter from Rep. Gonzales on the migrant rest area proposal. Chairman García stated he will review the letter and will determine on ways COSSA can collaborate with these efforts.

V. New Business:

- 1) New meeting date and location: Detroit Science Center – March 5. Commissioner Rodriguez stated the Accidental Mummies Exhibit will be still be in Detroit and she is hopeful to get a tour set up for the Commission.

MOTION: Commissioner Villarreal motioned to adjourn. Motion supported by Commissioner Garcia. Motion carried.

Adjournment at 11:25 a.m.

Prepared by Commission staff:



Lawrence García
Chairperson

05/07/2010
Date



Olga Hernandez-Patino
Secretary

3-5-10
Date